

# Georgia Mail Ballot Trends

**November 2, 2020**

The accompanying graphs document important trends related to absentee ballots in Georgia. The data were downloaded from the website of the Georgia Secretary of State. *Request data*, *return data*, and *ballots outstanding* all come from the Georgia SOS's Voter Absentee files, which contain a complete list of all voters who voted absentee by mail or early in-person, and can be downloaded here:

<https://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/voterabsenteefile.do>. We exclude early in person votes from the following analysis, and focus on absentee by mail votes.

The Voter Absentee File contains the voter's application date, application status, issue date (date that the ballot was sent to the voter), ballot return date (date the ballot was received by the election administrator), as well as the ballot status and, if the ballot was cancelled or rejected, the reason for doing so. The Absentee File also contains unique voter registration numbers, which we use to merge to a voter file of Georgia voters that contains race, age, gender, and vote history.

Note that the absentee file statistics pertain to individual ballot requests and returns. A small number of voters may have more than one request or return, because of problems encountered with the ballots. (For instance, if a voter "spoils" a ballot—that is, makes a mistake and asks for a new ballot—both the spoiled and replacement ballot will appear in the dataset.) There are also a large number of people who canceled their mail-ballots to vote early in-person. We have not removed duplicates such as these, so they are included in the following report statistics. As of writing, very few Georgia ballots have been rejected, likely because they have not formally rejected ballots yet and/or have not started reporting this in the absentee file. We report the weekly and total number of rejected ballots, but exclude the rejection plots that are in our other reports.

Because we purchased the Georgia voter file over the summer of 2020, any newly registered voters between then and the current election will not be in our voter file and hence we do not have their demographic information. These new registrants are excluded from the statistics reported and plots where demographic information is required (i.e. ballots by racial groups).

Each week runs from Sunday to Saturday. The data on the x-axis is the Sunday that begins the week.

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## Of Note this Week

- As of this past week, nearly 1.8 million mail ballots have been requested. Overall, 288,430 (16.2%) of these mail ballot requests were ultimately canceled, usually by voters themselves because they decided to vote early in person instead, or due to other administrative issues (e.g. the voter moved or ballot was destroyed).
- So far, 1,266,056 (71.5%) requested ballots have already been returned for counting. In total, 505,159 ballots are still outstanding.
- Cumulatively, White voters make up a slight majority of mail ballot requests overall (52%), followed by requests from Black voters (32%) and then the remaining (16%) from voters of other races.
- Rejections of mail ballots remain low, with only 1,587 of ballots (<1%) having been rejected so far, nearly all due to signature issues - either missing (70%) or invalid (30%).

## General trends

**For the week of October 25:**

- 48,251 mail ballots were requested. This brings the total number requested to 1,771,215.

- 71.48% of all requested ballots have been returned for counting.
- 316,325 mail ballots were returned. This bring the total number returned to 1,266,056.
- 505,159 mail ballots are still outstanding.

### **By race**

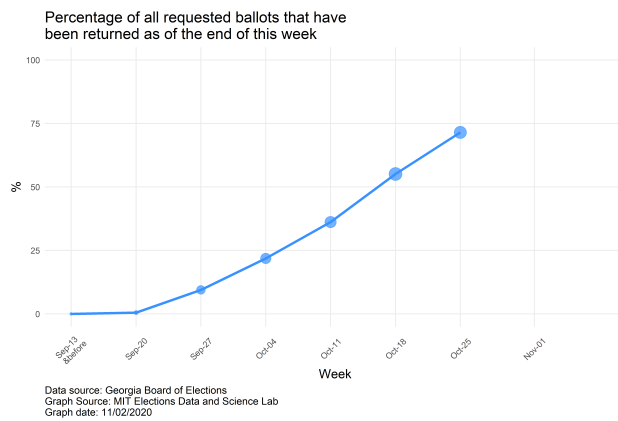
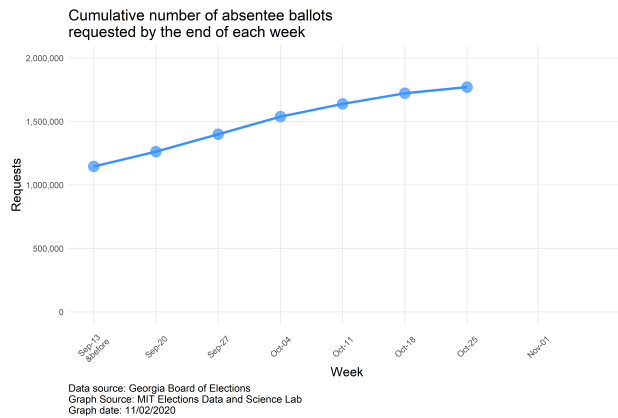
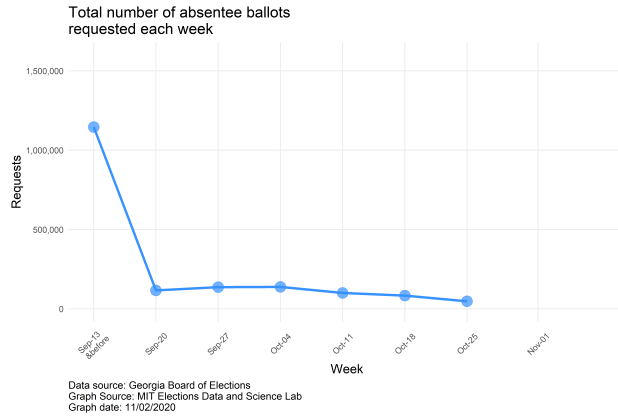
For the week of October 25,

- The breakdown of requests by race for the week was White 18,575, Black 16,524, and other race 9,373. Cumulatively, the breakdown of requests is White 895,509, Black 548,632, and other race 278,032.
  - 41.77% of ballots came from White voters, 37.16% from Black voters, and 21.08% from voters of other races. Cumulatively, 52% of requests have come from White voters, 31.86% from Black voters, and 16.14% from voters of other races.
- The breakdown of mail ballots returned by race for the week was White 164,511, Black 87,568, and other race 53,079. Cumulatively, the breakdown of returns is white 674,340, Black 382,477 and other race 183,062.
  - For the week, 53.91% of ballots were returned by White voters, 28.7% from Black voters, and 17.39% from voters of other races. Cumulatively, 54.39% of mail ballots returned have been from White voters, 30.85% from Black voters, and 14.76% from voters of other races.
  - Thus far, 75.3% of ballots requested by White voters have been returned, compared to 69.71% of ballots requested by Black voters and 65.84% of ballots requested by voters of other races.
- The breakdown of mail ballots still outstanding was White 221,169, Black 166,155, and other race 94,970.

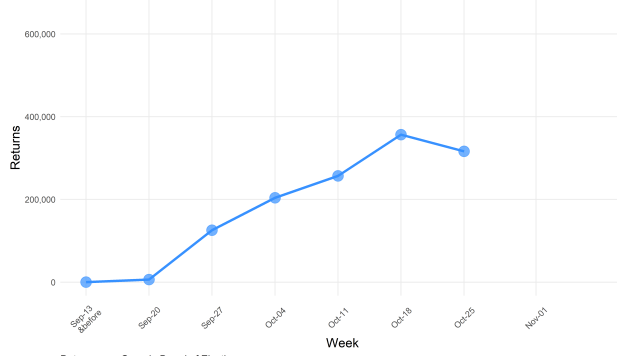
### **Ballots not accepted for counting**

- For the week, 220 ballots returned for counting were not accepted. Cumulatively, 732 ballots were not accepted.
- For the week, rates of non-acceptance by race were White 0.06%, Black 0.08%, and other race 0.08%. Cumulative rates by race have been White 0.03%, Black 0.1%, and other race 0.06%.

# Appendix 1: Aggregate Ballot Request and Return Trends

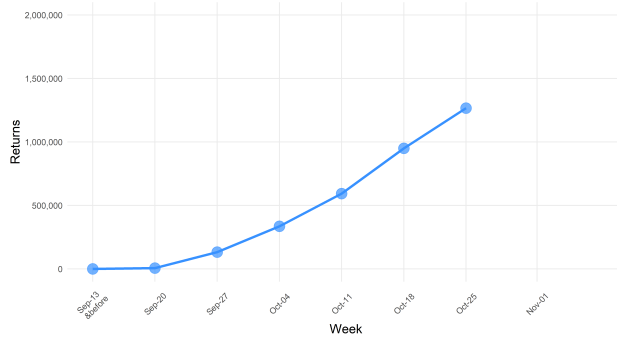


Number of ballots returned each week



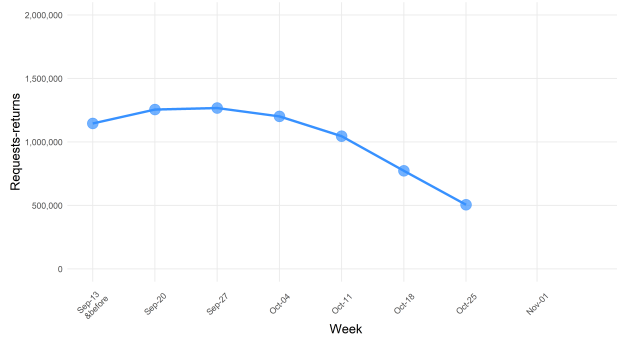
Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Cumulative number of ballots returned by the end of each week



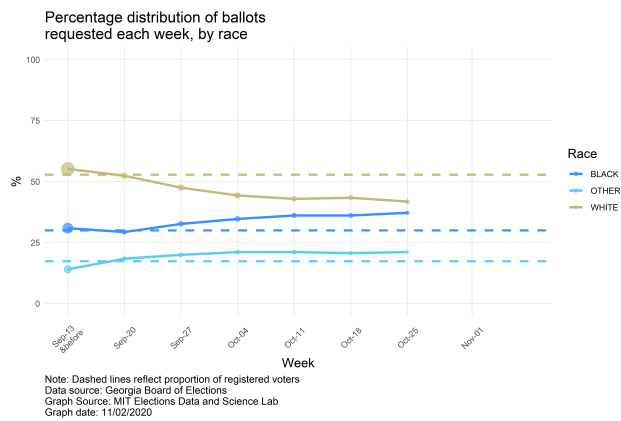
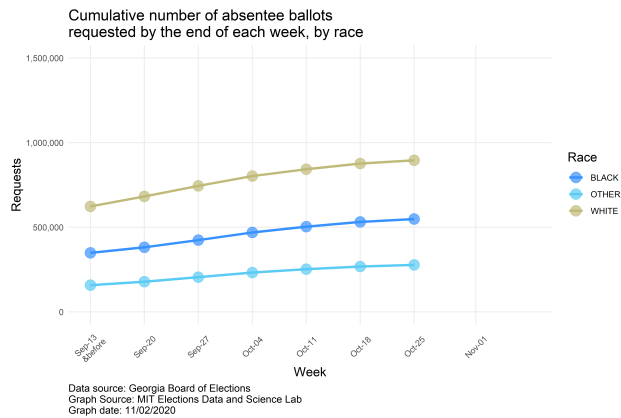
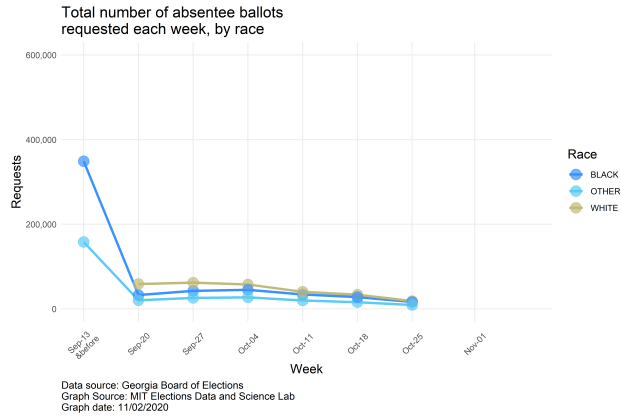
Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Number of ballots still outstanding, as of the end of the week

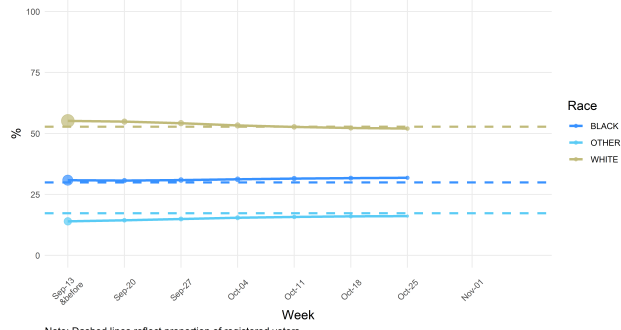


Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

## Appendix 2: Ballot Request and Return Trends by Race

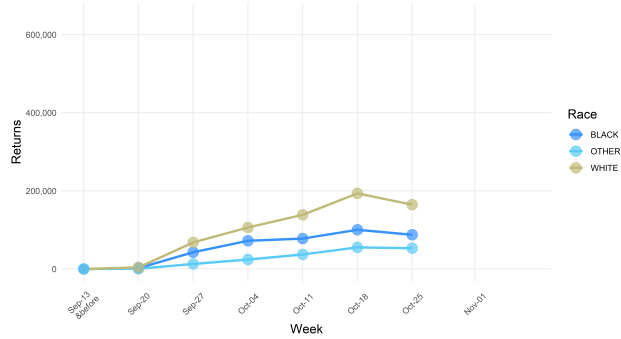


Cumulative percentage distribution of ballots requested by the end of each week, by race



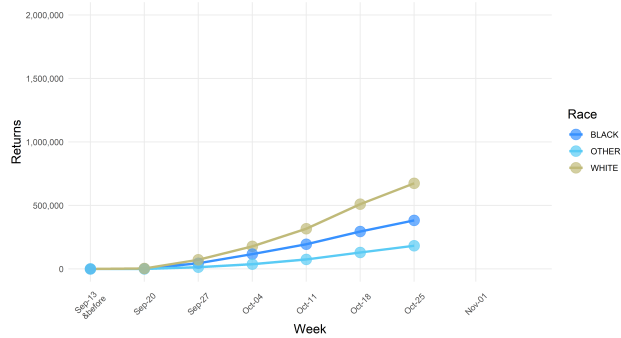
Note: Dashed lines reflect proportion of registered voters  
 Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Number of ballots returned each week, by race



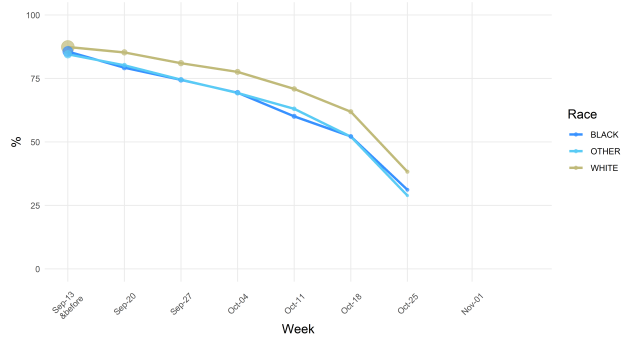
Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Cumulative number of ballots returned by the end of each week, by race



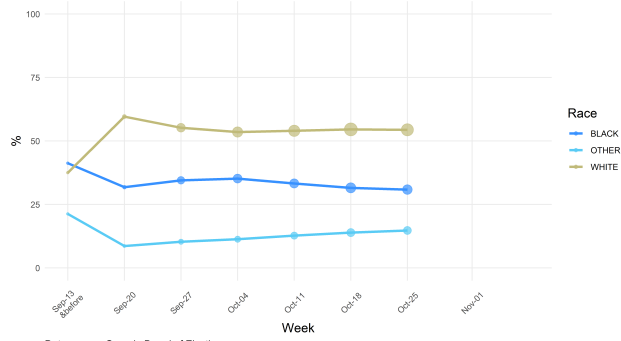
Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Percentage of ballots returned out of each week's requests, by race



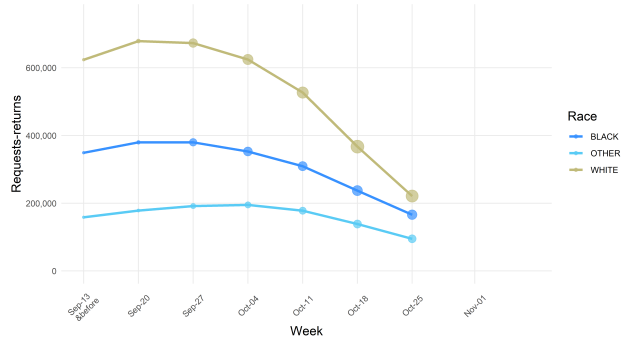
Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Cumulative percentage of ballots returned by the end of each week, by race



Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020

Number of ballots still outstanding, as of the end of the week, by race



Data source: Georgia Board of Elections  
 Graph Source: MIT Elections Data and Science Lab  
 Graph date: 11/02/2020